



Community Health Improvement Process

**2014-2015 Community Health Needs Assessment
Community Conversation in Korean
1335 Piccard Drive, Rockville, MD
September 15, 2015**

Introduction

Healthy Montgomery hosted a community conversation on health and well-being with Korean-speaking participants at the Asian American Health Initiative Meeting Room on Tuesday, September 15, 2015. The conversation took place from 3:00 to 5:00 pm in Rockville, MD. There were 8 Korean speaking participants. The conversation was facilitated by Jennie Chung in Korean language.

The community conversation included a discussion of what is meant by health and well-being at the individual and community levels, elements of a healthy community, community assets and challenges in Montgomery County, and practical steps to improve the health and well-being of the community. This particular group shared their ideas and opinions as non-speakers of English. All participants engaged in this group discussion, and were also offered the opportunity to contribute comments and feedback regarding the meeting in writing.

Defining Health and Well-Being

The conversation began with the group sharing what health and well-being meant for them. Staying in good spirits (positive attitudes and thoughts), doing regular exercise, eating healthy and balanced meals each day, and spending time with family members and close friends were mentioned most often. For some, mental health was one of the key elements of being healthy and well-being. Participants also mentioned having a religion, engaging in a hobby and having a pet.

Assets that Support Health and Well-Being

Community participants identified resources and programs in the community (Montgomery County) that enabled them to thrive in their healthiest state of wellness.

Montgomery County provides assets that support healthy communities:

- Ethnic senior day care centers for non-native speakers of English
- Urgent care centers that are being built throughout the county
- Government subsidized taxi services for seniors
- Free bus rides for seniors during non-rush hours
- Free health clinics and workshops for Korean speaking residents that are being held at Korean churches or organizations
- Speed cameras in residential areas for safety
- Free interpretation services at hospitals and some doctor's offices
- Various language books at local libraries



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- Flu vaccine clinics at grocery stores
- Free English conversation classes at local libraries
- Clinics such as Mobile Med provides a mini Korean clinic on Fridays for low-income Korean speaking patients
- Care for Kids Program provides health care to uninsured children (Several participants had grandchildren who just immigrated to the US and had no insurance because of their legal status)

Barriers to Health and Well-Being

Participants discussed challenges in their community (Montgomery County) that make healthy living more difficult.

Montgomery County is challenged by various health concerns identified as:

- Not many doctors take Medicaid patients
- It is very challenging to find specialists who take Medicaid
- Dental care cost is too high
- Income measurement for applying to the senior day care center is too strict (want to see some leniency toward applicants who are turned down by slightly being above the income guidelines)
- Poor lunch menus at schools (Concern for their growing grandchildren)
- Water quality seems to be poor in the area and buying bottled water or having a water filter machine isn't that affordable
- Concern for Lime disease prevents them from enjoying the local park
- From spring to fall season, the local tree and grass allergy prevents them from pursuing outdoor activities and it also causes illness for many
- Certain places where you share the road with bicycles seem quite dangerous (need to make it safer for both drivers and bicycle riders)

There are challenges in receiving adequate and needed services at local department of health offices due to ineffective ways of operating the system such as:

- The wait time to see a case manager or an officer at a local health department is too long (Just getting a ticket to see a case worker takes about an hour and then waiting to be called takes another hour or so)
- Maryland Health Connection has too many issues (phone assistance takes up the entire day and the online service is not easy to use for common people)
- No access to language assistance at local health department
- More trained health care staff need to be hired at local health departments to help residents with health care issues in this major transitioning time

Lack of safe exercise areas in senior apartments and residential areas such as:

- No indoor sports facilities for residents in many of the senior apartments in the county (Many seniors who have no access to indoor facility at their apartments go to nearby shopping malls to do their daily walking)
- Not enough walking trails in residential areas (unsafe to walk or jog with cars coming in and out)



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- Outside playgrounds in residential areas usually provide equipment for children not for adults
- Seniors who are unable to drive can't drive to nearby parks to exercise
- Hire a bilingual staff at senior apartment where there is one predominant ethnic population to reduce communication issues arising from a language barrier
- Not enough lighting in many residential areas

Practical Steps to Improve Health and Well-Being

Participants identified actions to improve the health and well-being in their community. Participants prioritized these actions by voting. *Each participant was given 5 stickers to place besides the suggestions that were most important to them. They could use all 5 stickers on one particular action or spread their stickers across 5 different actions or another combination.*

Participants made the following suggestions to improve health and well-being of Montgomery County. The suggestions are listed in the order of the vote counts.

1. Affordable dental care system/insurance is in need for everyone. (8 priority votes)
2. Hire more staff to assist clients at local health departments to reduce wait time being too long. (6 priority votes)
3. Provide language assistance (via phone) at local health departments so non-speakers of English clients can communicate with case workers. (6 priority votes)
4. Create indoor sports facilities at senior apartments so that they can get their exercise done regardless of the weather condition. (6 priority votes)
5. Create outdoor exercise equipment for adults at residential playgrounds. (5 priority votes)
6. Provide safe walking trails in residential areas for people who can't drive to nearby parks. (5 priority votes)
7. Provide healthy and nutritious meals at schools for our future generation. (4 priority votes)
8. Control the deer population in the area to reduce the risk of Lyme Disease. (4 priority votes)
9. Remove the trees and plants that cause severe allergy (People take too much allergy medication all year long) (4 priority votes)
10. Consider revising health care system for Medicaid beneficiaries to receive fair benefits (Not many specialists take Medicaid patients) (4 priority votes)
11. Consider revising income support measurements to seniors who wish to use senior day care centers. (One suggestion was to give the seniors who are denied to participate in the



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program due to their slightly high income could be given a chance to participate in a group sports activity a few times a week or so.) (4 priority votes)

12. Consider hiring a bilingual staff at senior apartments where there is one predominant ethnic population residing to reduce any communication issues arising from the language barrier. (3 priority votes)

13. Maryland Health Connection needs to be more efficient in providing customer services- phone and in-person service takes up too much of waiting time and the online service is not easy to use for end users. (2 priority votes)

14. Review the roads that share with bicycle riders. (Some roads are quite dangerous to share.) (1 priority vote)

15. Check the quality of drinking water in the area. (Some had concerns about the overall water quality in the area.) (1 priority vote)

Community Conversation Feedback

Participants were provided an opportunity to give written feedback about the meeting. In a short closeout survey, participants were asked, "Is there anything else that you want us to know, including what you like or did not like about this community conversation?" Four participants responded to this question and their comments are provided below.

"I enjoyed having this opportunity to share ideas and comments regarding our health in the community and I truly appreciate the chance to share all this in our own language."

"I wish there will be more meetings like this in the future so that we can contribute our inputs to the community"

"It could be little off the topic, but the overall health insurance system in the U.S. is way too complicated and hard to understand. I always have hard time understanding the medical statements even when someone who speaks Korean translates it for me. "

"I can't emphasize enough for the need for affordable dental care in our community."